

School and Communities Program. Research has shown that many suicides are preventable; however, effective suicide prevention programs require commitment and resources. I feel that the Federal Government should provide the resources and support to States and localities.

My amendment would allow the Secretary of Education to award \$25 million worth of grants to elementary and secondary schools for the purpose of: (1) developing and implementing suicide prevention programs; and (2) provide for the training of school administrators, faculty and staff with respect to identifying the warning signs of suicide and creating a plan of action for helping those at risk.

This is a small step in the right direction. It is time that we do something to fight the suicide epidemic. With an unacceptably high suicide rate, more attention must be focused on both the causes and solutions to this growing tragedy. I urge my colleagues to support this amendment. America's youth are crying out for help.

AMENDMENT NO. 624, AS MODIFIED

Mr. HOLLINGS. Mr. President, I rise today to thank the distinguished Senator from Massachusetts and the distinguished Senator from New Hampshire for accepting amendment No. 624, an amendment to continue the Blue Ribbon Schools program and authorize a demonstration program to investigate how we can implement the best practices of Blue Ribbon Schools in schools that this bill identifies as needing improvement.

The United States Department of Education awarded the first Blue Ribbon designations to middle and high schools in 1982. The first elementary schools received the designation in 1985. Since that time, we have identified thousands of exemplary schools that have undergone a thorough self-assessment involving parents, teachers, and community members; evaluated their practices in areas such as school leadership, professional development, curriculum, and student support services; and proven that these practices work through performance on standardized tests and other indicators. I think every member of this body can attest to the quality of the Blue Ribbon Schools in his or her state.

The legislation before the Senate would create two new awards programs, the Achievement in Education Awards and the No Child Left Behind Awards. Mr. President, I did not offer this amendment in opposition to the Department offering these awards. In fact, I support the recognition of schools that significantly improve student achievement. However, these two awards are outcomes-based, focused on which schools improve test scores from one year to another. The Blue Ribbon program offers a contrast. It recognizes

schools that work with parents and community members to identify shortcomings within the school and design programs to successfully address those shortcomings. I believe that we should continue to recognize these schools.

For the Blue Ribbon Program to continue and thrive, we must commit to applying the information we gather from Blue Ribbon designees to offer schools in need of improvement. This process works. Beaufort Elementary School was included in a list of the 200 worst schools in South Carolina during the 1994-95 school year. Yet instead of relying on an academic or bureaucratic improvement process, the school constructed a road map for reform using the successful practices of Blue Ribbon Schools. Less than six years later, Beaufort Elementary received a Blue Ribbon designation of its own, symbolizing a 180-degree turnaround. Another school that has successfully used this process to generate positive school reform is Handle Middle School in Columbia, SC. I hope all of my colleagues will take the time to read the May 21, 2001 issue of Time magazine that recognizes Hand Middle School as the Middle School of the Year. The article does a much better job than I could of describing a school that implemented changes based on the successful practices of Blue Ribbon schools and rallied the community to create a better, more productive learning environment for students. These schools now serve as a model for other low-performing schools who are working tirelessly to reverse their fortunes.

I have included new authorization in my amendment to allow the Department of Education to initiate demonstration projects that would use the best practices of Blue Ribbon Schools to turn around schools that fail to make average yearly progress. This is an area that the Department has neglected since the inception of the Blue Ribbon Program. As we speak, filing cabinets full of Blue Ribbon applications containing information on research-based educational practices that work are doing little else but gathering dust. Let's take this information and get it out to schools in need of improvement and see how it works.

This is not a bureaucratic or regimented process. This is not a process that involves Federal or state governments mandating one approach over another. This is not a process that attempts to reinvent the wheel. This would be a process that disseminates information on practices that we know are effective. I envision schools first identifying an area for development—whether it be a new reading curriculum, teacher mentoring or a dropout prevention program. Next, they are able to examine records from Blue Ribbon Schools that have implemented similar programs and decide which ap-

proach best fits their own needs. Because these programs come from Blue Ribbon Schools, they are researched-based and have been favorably reviewed by educational experts. I have also required the Secretary to report to Congress on the effectiveness of these demonstration projects 3 years after the demonstration begins, so we will know if this process is working.

Mr. KENNEDY. I thank our colleagues for their cooperation. We have been making important progress. I am not sure we can say yet tonight that the end is quite in sight, but hopefully we can say that at the early part at the end of the day on Tuesday we might be able to see a glimmer of hope for reaching a final disposition of this legislation.

I thank all colleagues for their cooperation, and I thank my friend from New Hampshire, Senator GREGG, and, as always, the Senator from Nevada, Mr. REID.

Mr. REID. Madam President, before going to morning business, I compliment the managers of this legislation. It is obvious they are both veterans and understand the legislative process. We have made great progress the last 2 days.

As Senator KENNEDY has said, next week we should be able to finish this bill with a little bit of luck.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REED. I ask unanimous consent we now go into a period of morning business, with Senators allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes, with the exception of Senator MURRAY, who wishes 15 minutes, and Senator FEINGOLD for 15 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The remarks of Mrs. MURRAY pertaining to the submission of S. Con. Res. 47 are printed in today's RECORD under "Submission of Concurrent and Senate Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

THE FEDERAL DEATH PENALTY SYSTEM

Mr. FEINGOLD. Madam President, I rise today to speak with grave concern about a report released by the Justice Department yesterday on our Federal Government's administration of the death penalty. In that report and in his testimony before the House Judiciary Committee yesterday, Attorney General John Ashcroft said that he now concludes that "there is no evidence of racial bias in the administration of the federal death penalty." I am seriously, seriously concerned about and, frankly, disappointed by the Attorney General's statements. The report he released yesterday is not the in-depth analysis of the federal death penalty ordered by

his predecessor, Attorney General Reno, and President Clinton.

This is a very urgent matter because the Federal Government, in a matter of days, is about to resume executions for the first time in decades, including that of Juan Raul Garza. He is scheduled to be executed by the United States of America on June 19. Mr. Garza's case has not received the level of intense scrutiny or legal representation that his more notorious death row colleague, Timothy McVeigh, has received. But Mr. Garza's case, and his possible execution, should cause the Attorney General, President Bush, and our Nation even deeper soul-searching than that which has begun with respect to the scheduled execution of Mr. McVeigh.

A survey on the Federal death penalty system was released by the U.S. Department of Justice in September 2000. That report showed racial and regional disparities in the Federal Government's administration of the death penalty. In other words, who lives and who dies in the Federal system appears to relate to the color of the defendant's skin or the region of the country where the defendant is prosecuted. Attorney General Reno, Deputy Attorney General Holder, and President Clinton all said they were "troubled" or "disturbed" by the results of that report.

In fact, Attorney General Reno was so troubled by the report that she immediately ordered the collection of additional data from U.S. attorney offices and, most importantly, the National Institute of Justice to conduct an in-depth examination in cooperation with outside experts.

I would like to take a moment to read what Attorney General Reno said that day in September:

There are important limitations on the scope of our survey. The survey only captures data currently available beginning when a U.S. attorney submits a capital eligible case to the review committee and to me for further review. This survey, therefore, does not address a number of important issues that arise before the U.S. attorney submits a case: Why did the defendant commit the murder? Why did the defendant get arrested and prosecuted by Federal authorities rather than by state authorities? Why did the U.S. attorney submit the case for review rather than enter a plea bargain? . . . More information is needed to better understand the many factors that effect how homicide cases make their way into the Federal system, and once in the Federal system, why they follow different paths. An even broader analysis must therefore be undertaken to determine if bias does, in fact, play any role in the Federal death penalty system.

I've asked the National Institute of Justice to solicit research proposals from outside experts, to study the reasons why, under existing standards, homicide cases are directed to the state or Federal systems, and charged either as capital cases or non-capital cases, as well as the factors accounting for the present geographic pattern of submissions by the U.S. Attorney's Offices. The department

will also welcome related research proposals that outside experts may suggest.

In December, President Clinton, citing this ongoing review by the Justice Department, then delayed the execution of Mr. Garza until June 19 to allow the Justice Department time to complete its review. President Clinton also ordered the Justice Department to report to the President by April of this year on the results of its further review. President Clinton anticipated that this would have been sufficient time for the President to review the results of the review before deciding whether to proceed with Mr. Garza's execution on June 19.

On January 10 of this year, before the new administration took office, the NIJ began its in-depth analysis by convening a meeting of outside experts, defense counsel and prosecutors to discuss the questions that should form the basis for the research proposals.

Later in January, during his confirmation hearing, Attorney General Ashcroft promised to continue and not terminate the NIJ study.

At that hearing, I asked him if he would support the effort of the National Institute of Justice already underway to undertake the study of racial and regional disparities in the Federal death penalty system that President Clinton deemed necessary.

Attorney General Ashcroft said, unequivocally and emphatically, "yes."

I then asked him whether he would continue and support all efforts initiated by Attorney General Reno's Justice Department to undertake a thorough review and analysis of the Federal death penalty system.

Attorney General Ashcroft said, ". . . the studies that are under way, I'm grateful for them. When the material from those studies comes, I will examine them carefully and eagerly to see if there are ways for us to improve the administration of justice."

I then followed up with yet a third question on this subject: "So those studies will not be terminated?"

Attorney General Ashcroft responded: "I have no intention of terminating those studies."

In response to written questions I provided to him following his live testimony, I asked the Attorney General a number of related questions about the need to eliminate racial or regional bias from our system of justice. He replied that he believed the Department of Justice should undertake "all reasonable and appropriate research necessary to understand the nature of the problem."

It is clear that Attorney General Ashcroft said he would continue and not terminate the NIJ study initiated by the Reno administration. I was pleased to hear him make this commitment.

But, since the new administration took office, no steps have been taken

to move forward with the NIJ study. Rather, the Attorney General now believes it would take much too long to conduct this in-depth analysis of disparities and that it would provide indefinite answers. To say that the NIJ research should not be undertaken because it may take more than a year and provide inconclusive answers is just baffling. I am absolutely confounded by the Attorney General's unwillingness to take such a simple step to ensure fairness and to promote public confidence in the Federal system.

Now, Attorney General Ashcroft did say yesterday that he would order the National Institute of Justice to study the effectiveness of Federal, state and local law enforcement in the investigation and prosecution of murder in American and how death penalty cases are brought into the Federal system. While this review may provide some additional insight into the functioning of our criminal justice system, it is not the NIJ review of racial and geographic disparities ordered by Attorney General Reno.

The supplemental report released yesterday lacks credibility: it is a case of "we looked at ourselves and there's no evidence of bias." Instead of completing a thorough analysis of the racial and regional disparities with outside experts, as outlined by Attorney General Reno, Attorney General Ashcroft collected the additional data—also ordered separately by Attorney General Reno—threw in some statements that there is no evidence of bias and released it as a supplemental report. This report does not dig behind the raw data in the way that an in-depth research and analysis could do.

To her credit, Attorney General Reno recognized the need for input from outside experts. That is why she ordered the National Institute of Justice to undertake the review of racial and regional disparities. While I commended Attorney General Reno for her action in ordering further studies, I thought she should have gone one step further and establish an independent, blue ribbon commission to review the Federal system. That's what Governor George Ryan did in Illinois, and the independent panel there has been doing some goodwork. I've introduced a bill that applies Governor Ryan's example to the Federal Government, the National Death Penalty Moratorium Act. We should demand the highest standards of fairness and credibility in our Nation's administration of the ultimate punishment.

Attorney General Ashcroft's actions are wholly unsatisfactory and inconsistent with the promises he made to the Senate and the Nation during his confirmation hearing.

I was pleased to hear Attorney General Ashcroft say on Friday, May 11:

Our system of justice requires basic fairness, evenhandedness and dispassionate

evaluate of the evidence and the facts. These fundamental requirements are essential to protecting the constitutional rights of every citizen and to sustaining public confidence in the administration of justice. . . . It is my responsibility to promote the sanctity of the rule of law and justice. It is my responsibility and duty to protect the integrity of our system of justice.

The basic fairness, evenhandedness and dispassionate evaluation of the evidence and facts, about which he spoke, extend to the troubling racial and regional disparities in the Federal system, as documented by the Department of Justice September 2000 report.

As my colleagues are aware, I oppose the death penalty. I have never made any bones about that. But this is not really about just being opposed to the death penalty. This is about bias-free justice in America. I am certain that not one of my colleagues in the Senate—not a single one—no matter how strong a proponent of the death penalty, would defend racial discrimination in the administration of that ultimate punishment. The most fundamental guarantee of our Constitution is equal justice under law, equal protection of the laws. To be true to that central precept of our national identity, we have to take extremely seriously allegations that the death penalty is being administered in a discriminatory fashion.

So I urge the Attorney General, in the strongest possible terms, to reconsider his actions and direct the National Institute of Justice to continue its study, with outside experts, of the racial and regional disparities in the Federal death penalty system. I also urge him to provide the NIJ whatever resources may be needed to complete this study. This is the only course consistent with the promises he made during his confirmation hearing.

Furthermore, with Mr. Garza's execution still scheduled to take place and the NIJ study at a standstill, I urge the Attorney General to postpone Mr. Garza's execution until these questions of fairness are fully answered. The case of Mr. Garza—a Hispanic and convicted in Federal court in Texas—implicates the very issues at the center of the unfairness reflected in the DOJ report. It would be wholly illogical and unjust to go forward with plans for the execution of Mr. Garza and subsequent executions until the NIJ's study is completed and fully reviewed. It would be a great travesty of justice, as well as a great diminution in the public's trust in the Federal criminal justice system, if the Federal Government executed Mr. Garza and the NIJ later completed its study, which corroborated racial or regional bias in the administration of the Federal death penalty.

The integrity of our system of justice demands no less.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

COMMENDING SENATOR FEINGOLD

Mr. REID. Before my friend from Wisconsin leaves the Chamber, I would like to say that I have always been very impressed with the Senator from Wisconsin. I may not always agree with him on the issues—but most of the time I do—but one reason I am so impressed with him is he is always so thorough and has such a conviction about the issue of which he speaks. Whether it is an issue dealing with foreign policy or a country the name of which most of us have trouble pronouncing, he understands what is going on in that country and the human rights violations that take place.

I never had the opportunity to say publicly to my friend from Wisconsin how impressed I am with his intellectual capabilities and his ability to express them in this Chamber. I do that now and congratulate him.

Mr. FEINGOLD. I thank the Senator very much.

SENATE PAGE RECOGNITION

Mr. LOTT. Madam President, this Friday is graduation day for the Senate pages. These young men and women are some of the hardest working employees of the Senate. They have a grueling schedule. Many people don't know that the pages go to school from 6:00 a.m. until the Senate opens, and are here even past the time the Senate gavels out. In the past few weeks we have had several late evenings, sometimes not leaving until after midnight. While most of the Senate employees go home and go to sleep, the pages do not. After work the pages have homework and studying to do. Their work is never done.

They do an invaluable service for the United States Senate and get little acclaim. However the experience is extraordinary and one they will remember for the rest of their lives.

Over the past semester the pages have been witness to several historical events. The State of the Union, the passing of the largest tax cut in history and being a part of an evenly divided Senate.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize each page and the State that they represent.

Republicans: Kendall Fitch, South Carolina; Jackie Grave, Missouri; Elizabeth Hansen, Utah; Joshua Hanson, Indiana; JeNel Holt, Alaska; Adrian Howell, Mississippi; Eddie McGaffigan, Virginia; Mary Hunter (Mae) Morris, Alabama; Jennifer Ryan, Idaho; Megan Smith, Kentucky; O. Dillion Smith, Vermont; Garrett Young, New Hampshire;

Democrats: Libby Benton, Michigan; Steve Hoffman, Vermont; Alexis Gassenhuber, Wisconsin; Kelsey Walter, South Dakota; Michael Henderson, South Dakota; Kathryn Bangs, South Dakota; Tristan Butterfield, Montana;

Lyndsey Williams, Illinois; Joshua Baca, New Mexico; Andrew Smith, Texas.

Congratulations to you all on a successful semester as a Senate page. We wish you the best of luck as you encounter all future challenges. Thank you for your patronage and service to the U.S. Senate.

IN HONOR OF MR. WILLIAM T. KOOT

Mr. REID. Madam President, I rise today to honor a distinguished Nevadan, a good man, and a good friend, Mr. William T. Koot. On June 8, 2001, Bill will be retiring from the Clark County District Attorney's office after nearly 30 years of service.

When Chief Deputy District Attorney William T. Koot retires on Friday, the people of Clark County, NV, will lose a wonderful advocate.

Bill has been the heart and soul of the Clark County District Attorney's Office for decades. The leadership that he has provided, the examples that he has set, the standards of integrity that he has insisted upon for himself and for others, are immeasurable. He is a terrific trial lawyer, an outstanding legal scholar, a leader in the community, an effective prosecutor, and most importantly, a good friend.

Bill's legacy of service to the State of Nevada is long and remarkable. He joined the Office of the District Attorney in 1972, after having served 3 years in the United States Marine Corps and acquiring his law degree from the University of San Diego.

During his nearly 30 years of service, Bill has tried literally thousands of cases. Of his 132 jury trials, Bill has successfully prosecuted and obtained 93 guilty verdicts. He has supervised with distinction dozens of prosecutors, and during the past 6 years, he has headed the office's major violators unit.

As Clark County District Attorney Stewart Bell has said, Bill Koot will truly be missed. I extend to him my most sincere congratulations and the appreciation of all Nevadans for his good work on our behalf.

KIDS AND GUNS

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, the June issue of the journal *Pediatrics* reports the results of a disturbing study on children and guns. A journal article describes an experiment conducted by researchers from Emory University School of Medicine and Children's Healthcare of Atlanta-Egleston Hospital. The researchers wanted to determine how sixty four eight to twelve year old boys would behave when they found a handgun in a presumably unthreatening environment.

Researchers placed groups of two or three boys in a room with a one way mirror. Two water pistols and an actual .380 caliber handgun were concealed in separate drawers in the room.